

Wild Elk

Elk are wild animals. If humans get too close or provoke these creatures, a peaceful scene can turn into a dangerous situation. Elk behavior changes with the seasons. In the fall, mature male elk compete for control of the females. They will trample vegetation and roll around in mud wallows during the rut as a prelude to clashes with rival bulls. During this time, elk are unpredictable and can charge people.

In late spring, pregnant females move away from the herd to give birth in calving areas in thickets at the edge of the meadow. Once born, the calves remain hidden for the first week or two. Their mothers graze a short distance away, poised to protect them if people or predators venture near.

Male elk can be very dangerous as they compete with each other for control of female harems.



Female cows will charge and kick with their front hooves when threatened—particularly during calving season.



By late summer, the males' antlers, which were shed in the spring, are fully regrown and hardened.



In the fall, bulls make a bellowing or whistling sound called "bugling" to attract mates and warn competitors.



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